

WANDERERS WARN LOOK OUT! WE'RE ON THE WAY BACK

Les Merrick is on target again

Wycombe Wanderers 2, Hendon 0

IN FOUR DAYS Wycombe Wanderers have accounted for the scalps of Leytonstone—the 1968 Amateur Cup winners—and Hendon, who finished third in last season's table. With these two victories Wanderers have sounded this clear warning to the remainder of the Isthmian League clubs—we're on the way back!

After a jittery opening 15-minute spell at Loakes Park on Tuesday evening, Wycombe settled down to take command of the mid-field territory through the skilful prompting of Barry Baker and Dave Thomas.

During that opening period Wanderers' goalkeeper John Maskell, on two occasions, was forced to plunge at the feet of a Hendon forward to keep his goal intact.

Hendon's early play was impressive—moving off the ball intelligently and switching the pattern of the build-up quickly.

LAILEY SHINES

The slippery surface made it difficult for defenders to turn and recover once they had committed themselves but at the back of Wycombe's defence was Julian Lailey, always tidying up with an air of composure and unflapability. Despite an array of four internationals in their defence, Hendon had no Lailey in their side to direct their defensive operations.

Slowly but surely Wycombe took a grip on the game and although they pushed Hendon back into their own zone, goalkeeper John Swannell was not seriously tested in the opening 30-minute act.

However, the position was to change drastically 180 seconds later. Wanderers won a corner on the left as the ground was

bathed in the glare from the floodlights. Horseman pushed a short pass to Gale, who fired a knee-high drive across the face of the Hendon goalmouth.

The ball struck a Hendon defender and popped up conveniently for Merrick, standing on the six-yard line, to head Wycombe in front. In the opening four games Merrick, who is often criticised by many Wycombe fans, has not failed to get his name on the scorers' list.

Wanderers' 4-2-4 plan did not appear so rigid as usual with a little more flexibility. It is obvious that the players are becoming more familiar with the system and in doing so individuals are expressing a greater freedom inside the plan. Seven minutes after the break left-back Charlie Gale hobbled from the field with ankle trouble which had been bothering him through the first-half. Lou Temel substituted.

Against a side of Hendon's class it was necessary for Wanderers to secure another goal if they were to breathe more comfortably. This they did in the 65th minute mainly through the persistence of Len Worley.

UNHAPPY GAME

Worley had been giving Hendon's full-back Derek Gamblin, signed from Sutton United, an unhappy passage and Gamblin was nowhere to be seen when Worley received a pass some 40-yards from goal.

His well-flighted cross beat Poole's leap and Horseman's head did the rest. Swannell was far from satisfied about the validity of the goal and ran to the half-way line to protest to the referee, claiming Horseman had punched the ball in.

After consulting his linesman Mr. K. E. Teeves waved the protests aside and pointed to the centre-spot much to the relief of the crowd.

Wycombe Wanderers: J. Maskell; I. Rundle, J. Lailey; V. Faulkner; C. Gale, B. Baker; D. Thomas, L. Worley, K. Samuels, A. Horseman, L. Merrick.